

WELCOME BACK STUDENTS

THE BELL RINGER

Montgomery Bell Academy

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The Bell Ringer would like to congratulate Bryant Hahnfeldt (left) for winning Mr. Football (kicker) and Joseph Birdsong for winning runner-up Mr. Football (lineman).

Basketball Playing Well

by CLAY COOPER
Sports Editor

It is officially basketball season, and the Big Red is off to a good start. With a record of 5-4, the 2004-2005 team is on its way to meeting high expectations for this year. Despite the loss of senior all-state MVP Brad French, the team, now led by seniors Brenton Harrison, Taylor Gould, Tee Patterson, Jim Beckner, Ravi Mishra, CJ Hurt, and Hughes Tipton, is making a name for itself on the court.

Early victories against White House-Heritage and Independence offset a tough road trip to Memphis where the Red lost hard-fought and close games to MUS and Christian Brothers. Before the break they played a trio of home games, with losses against very talented Shelbyville and Harding Academy (Memphis) teams and an easy win against Knoxville Webb.

So far, the biggest win of the season came over the break on December 28th, when the Big Red held on to defeat Lebanon 51-48. The team held off a fourth-quarter rally behind Brenton Harrison's 18 points (8-10 free throws, 4-4 in the fourth quarter) and Deon Gaines' 15, upsetting the ninth-ranked team in the mid-state (according to *The Tennessean*). The team also defeated Hendersonville 52-38 on the 29th.

Region play this year against BA, Father Ryan, Pope John Paul II, BGA, and Uni-

versity School is expected to be well-matched and hard-fought. The Big Red will have to make a strong showing in regular season play to secure a good berth in the region and state tournaments, but having lost only a few contributing seniors the team is fairly experienced and familiar with intense games under head coach Kevin Anglin and his assistants Ronnic McMahan, Todd Moran, and Stephen Was.

"I think we can do well this year," says senior Patterson, "but we have to improve with each game." Coaches and players are focused on a state title, but to achieve this goal they will have to top teams such as BA and others that might be favored for the championship.

"We know it won't be easy," says Beckner. "We have been working hard for a long time, though, and we have the confidence we need."

With tough region play beginning January 6th, the upcoming games against an assortment of teams will provide ours with the preparation it needs to make a postseason run.

The Big Red's next game is at Wilson Central tonight, the 3rd. This Thursday, the 8th, the team begins region play with a huge home game against Father Ryan at 7:30.

As in any sport, fan support will be a key factor in the team's success this year. A consistent home court advantage should help motivate the Red, and I hope you will do your part by coming to as many games as possible. Support your team and watch as the Big Red dominates on the court this year.

Seniors Excel In College Early Admissions

by CURTISLANE
Editor-in-Chief

So far, MBA seniors have been extremely successful in the college admissions process. There have been, of course, a few decisions to either defer or deny that were surprising. Seniors have been hearing from colleges since the end of November, and as of December 29th, people had been admitted to at least 26 different colleges across the country.

There are several different types of early admission: Early Decision, Early Action, Single-Choice Early Action, and Rolling. Early Decision is binding, and if a student is admitted under this program, he must enroll at that school. Early Action is not binding, so the student finds out early, but is not required to attend that school. Single-Choice Early Action is not binding, but the student may only apply to one school early. Rolling Admission is used at many large schools, and students can apply at any time and usually hear back from the college quickly. Rolling Admission is not binding.

"I am most interested in giving every student the best options for college. I would like to congratulate those students who have already been accepted, and I want to spend the rest of

the year focusing on students who have not yet been accepted and personally help find the best college option for each of them," says Mr. Gioia.

This year, over one-half of the senior class applied under at least one of these early admissions options, and, as a whole, the class has done very well. Three students were admitted at Harvard, four at Wake Forest, and one student each at Yale, Princeton, Notre Dame, Duke, Georgetown, Cornell, and Virginia. Students have also been admitted at Furman, Reed, Southern Methodist, Georgia, Tulane, Auburn, Ole Miss, College of Charleston, Tennessee, Alabama, Texas A & M, Michigan, Kentucky, Miami (FL), Sewanee, Berkeley College, and Trinity College.

Several students will be continuing either athletic or debate careers in college. Jay Pilkerton will play football at Yale, Joseph Birdsong will play football at Wake Forest, Van Diehl will swim at Alabama, Tripp Rebrovick will debate at Harvard, and Alex Lamballe will debate at Wake Forest.

"I am very relieved, excited, and flattered, but most of all I am appreciative of the time and efforts of my teachers who wrote recommendations and especially thankful to Mr. Giffen and Mr. Klausner, whose help was immensely important," says Harvard-headed Tripp Rebrovick.



Coach Anglin talks to players during a timeout against Shelbyville.

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The staff of The Bell Ringer prepares all copy, headlines, and photographs at Montgomery Bell Academy. Franklin Web Printing in Franklin, Tennessee, prints the paper.

MBA Dedicates Sports History Wall to Patrick Hale, Class of '92

by **ALECMCGUFFEY**
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, December 1, MBA's faculty and students congregated in the gymnasium to pay tribute to Patrick Hale, Class of '92, who was killed last year in a tragic hit-and-run car accident in New York City. A number of Patrick's family members and former classmates attended the dedication, as well. Ten wall panels, researched by Ridley Wills, Jr. and designed to show the diverse history of MBA athletics, were dedicated in honor of Patrick. These panels now line a wall between the two gymnasiums.

His father, Walter Hale, spoke of Patrick's life and read the poem, "Just For Today," by which Patrick was continuously inspired and which he kept in his room throughout his MBA career. Also speaking were Headmaster Gioia and senior Curtis Lane. The memorial was concluded with an exhilarating 3-on-3 basketball tournament featuring current students Jay Pilkerton, Bransford Maxwell, Drew Carney, Luke Brown, Qushawn Clark, Phillip Cynn, and Carlton Baker and coaches Kevin Anglin and Ronnie McMahon.

Junior Class Sets Poinsettia Record

M.B.A.'s junior class sold a record 1,050 poinsettia plants this year. The floor of the little gym was packed with flowers. The junior class uses the profits from the sale of the plants to help finance the prom.

The poinsettia sale began in 1993, and during that sale only 300 plants were sold. Over the years, though, with repeat customers whose sons no longer attend M.B.A. and with several major business orders, the total sales have just continued to grow.

Mrs. Morrissey does most of the work. She takes in the orders and the money, orders the plants, and oversees the unloading and the labeling of each order. Class President Andy Snyder and class adviser Mr. Gaither oversee the delivery of the plants to customers. Andy made sure that a great number of the juniors were involved in the distribution. Andy says, "Thank you to everyone who supported our fund raiser this year. We are trying to raise enough money so that no one individual will have to pay to put together the prom this year, and it looks like we will meet this goal."

What the Bleep? What A Movie!

by **KEVIN THOMAS**
Staff Writer

What The Bleep Do We Know!? begins as a documentary about quantum physics. A variety of scientists and experts, whose credentials are not known until the end of the film, express their views on theories of perception versus reality and the coexistence of the past, present, and future. In a storyline with many humorous animations and great music, Marlee Matlin, a well-known deaf actress, plays the main character. Trapped in her mundane life, she en-

counters a young boy with a basketball who opens her mind to new possibilities and makes her see herself in a different light. As she embarks on this journey, the scientists all comment about how her experience relates to the theory of quantum physics. The most interesting thing about the movie is how it makes you aware of how you react to small incidents in everyday life and how you relate to the universe as a whole. It's weird, it's wacky and it's thought provoking, and if you like Boston's "More Than a Feeling" and Robert Palmer's "Addicted to Love," go see it!

Metallica Concert

by **TAYLOR GOULD**
Entertainment Editor

Much to the surprise of many casual fans, Metallica is still alive and touring and came to Nashville on November 11th to play at the Gaylord Entertainment Center. Being a school night and all, only the hardcore Metallica fans came out to the G.E.C.

The jolly fellows of Metallica went through a small but varied collection of songs from almost every album. Old favorites included "For Whom the Bell Tolls," "Wherever I May Roam," "Master of Puppets," "Sad but True," "Unforgiven," "Nothing Else Matters," and as the encores "One" and "Enter Sandman."

Fortunately Metallica avoided a foray into their new material; but it was obvious, however, that as a band they are just not the same anymore. As James Hetfield, singer and

rhythm guitarist, mentioned their new album, *St. Anger*, he mandated to the crowd, "Here is the place to let out the anger Nashville! Because this arena is the safest place around!" Since when has safety been such a concern of Metallica? It seemed a rather anti-climactic statement at the time, but maybe that's just me. Hetfield's breaking into bitter invective concerning his overcooked pre-concert eggplant would have had the same effect.

With all of that being said, the music was amazing. The talent of lead guitarist Kirk Hammett and drummer Lars Ulrich (the destroyer of Napster) never ceases to amaze. For everyone who never got to see Metallica in its prime (which includes me), seeing them on tour now is a great way to experience some great, soothing, refreshing, old school heavy-metal.

MBA Students Win Several AP Awards

MBA is proud to announce that the following seniors have been recognized by the College Board as Advanced Placement (AP) Scholars: Scholars—Hunter Branstetter, Jonathan Gotterer, Jared Hobbs, Tripp Rebrovick, and Josh Sumislawski. Scholars with Honor—Will Colton, Jed Crumbo, Will DeLoache, Paul Hendrick, Chad Hume, and Brian Syverud. Scholars with Distinction—Brock Baker, Forbes Belk, Curtis Lane, Jonathan Ray, and Will Smith.

News Brief

Music Program Wins Numerous Honors

Congratulations to Benedict Broy (our German exchange student who plays the violin), winner of the Nashville Youth Symphony Concerto Competition - he will be the featured soloist at the Youth Symphony's final concert in May!!

In the vocal area, Nick Luna, Pete Long-Innes, and John Turner were among the 250 singers (out of 1600 high school students auditioning) selected to sing in the Mid-State Chorus in February. In addition to the Mid-State, Long-Innes and Turner were selected as 2 of the 80 singers that will go on to the All-State Chorus in April.

More kudos to John Turner and Sam Moon—featured in a joint concert with Harpeth Hall and members of the Nashville Symphony. In addition, John Turner will make his professional oboe debut next Spring, playing the Telemann oboe concerto with members of the Nashville Symphony. This professional chamber orchestra will join MBA, Harpeth Hall and St. Cecilia in our annual combined concert. MBA is also well represented (with approximately one dozen students) in the The Nashville Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Hispanic Achievers

Hispanic Achievers Program and the students were recognized for the 3rd year in a row for their work and involvement with the Hispanic community of Nashville. Leaders of the Nashville business community, MBA parents, government, Republican Party representatives, and Hispanic leaders were present. MBA, Harpeth Hall and Brentwood Academy participate in this program. The Hispanic Achievers Program of the YMCA of Middle TN gave an award to only one student, an MBA student, Dennis Bermudez. This award is for his participation and commitment for the last three years (he hasn't missed a single day) and gave 50 hours of his time during last summer to do volunteer work for the Hispanic Achievers Program at the YMCA of Harding Place. Deniz Bermudez also received the Youth Leadership Award from The YMCA of Middle TN last Spring, 2004.

Debate Program

Continues Success

The MBA debate team rolled into Lexington, Kentucky for the Ohio Valley Invitational. In varsity policy debate, five of six teams reached elimination rounds. The team of Jamie Berk and Charlie Sharbel was eliminated by hitting a higher seeded MBA team, and Kyle Davis and Nick Shockey lost on a 2-1 decision to a strong team from Groves High School. The team of Alex Lamballe and Tripp Rebrovick lost in the octafinal rounds, while the teams of Kevin Wieck and Matt Bodnar and Matt Clair and Jonathan Cannon reached the quarterfinals, fully qualifying them for the Tournament of Champions in May. MBA already has three fully qualified teams for this national championship tournament, tying the school's historic mark for most teams qualified. That mark is in real danger, though. With 3 months of the qualification season remaining, it is very likely we will qualify 5 or even 6 teams this year.

Fiction Serial

Messengers of Beckoning

Season II, Part III

by CHRIS PICKENS
Staff Writer

Milo Darian finds himself within the castle of Camelot, minutes away from seeing the king...

They were inside Camelot. Not just a movie set, thought Milo, but for real, no-tom-foolery, wake-up-and-smell-the-chivalry castle of the most famous King of his age. As they walked through the hall, Milo could feel his mouth slacken with each passing second.

The stone masonry of the floors and walls, the bristling torch brackets on the walls, the ornate tapestries of incredible detail, the servant's blue livery emblazoned with a white sword in a stone, the echoes of ladies' laughter, the thin breeze that whipped around each corner seemed all not quite real. And yet, when he bumped straight into a rich-looking man in a ridiculous dress thing, the man grumbled at him and pushed past like a real man. It was real.

What's more, his environment seemed to see the reality of his and Baal's existence more clearly than he had seen his own environment. The man he had run into had done a funny sort of double take, fixing his squinting eyes on Milo's receding back until Milo rounded a corner. A servant here or there would look on, disapproving of their lack of ceremony or sense, and after passing more than one open door, Milo heard the scuffling of chairs as the occupants rushed to the threshold, murmuring to themselves.

Through all of this, Baal simply looked forward, his left hand swinging freely, his coat opened and flowing like a plague. He had a small smile on his face, but he seemed not to know it was there. He did look around when Milo found his voice to express a concern of his that had just popped into his head as the sound of a hundred voices reached his ears.

"Do you really think that they will let us saunter straight up to the king and tell him he's going to die sometime soon?"

"We will not tell him just yet," replied Baal quietly. "But he needs to know we are here. More importantly," he said, his voice dropping further, "the killer needs to see us."

Milo narrowed his eyes. "The one who is supposed to kill him is..."

"Right in front of him? Yes, the killer is a nobleman, from somewhere around modern-day Manchester."

Milo dodged a scullery maid bearing a load of linens taller than she was. "Why does he want to knock off Arthur?"

"Don't know. Doesn't much matter, though. The other side will clear the guy's path, then, we step in and do our stuff."

"Sounds romantic."

"Not for the one who dies."

They had come to a huge oak door. It

was covered with noble-looking embossments of knights on horseback charging figures on a great field of battle that snaked through various tales of the knights within. Two great rings, fashioned to look like rings in the nose of two grimacing bulls, glinted sullenly in the near-darkness of the hall.

"You still have not told me how we are getting in. I don't think they have a guest list with our names on it."

Baal smiled and pulled a small leather bag from his pocket. Without a word, he tossed it to the soldier, who turned and strode back the way they had come, his new fortune jingling down the hall.

"Don't worry, bribery is the way of politics in this time."

"Let's not restrict it to this century."

Baal was reaching back into his pockets. "Say what you will, but that bag of gold got us farther than any attempt to sneak into the castle. Now, where is...ah, there," he said, pulling out, to Milo's surprise, his CD player.

"I took it from your school bag," Baal explained, as Milo looked it over. "I thought it might come in handy with these people. Do you have an idea?"

"What are you looking for?"

"Anything they haven't seen. Use your imagination."

Milo smiled to himself. The hand inside spoke for itself. "Yeah, I got something. Real shock and awe."

"Good. Let's go." And Baal tugged the doors open.

If the Italian masters had been alive to paint the sight before Milo's eyes, they would have painted a masterpiece. But they would not have captured everything that was happening in the great hall. Opposite them, a tall, thin window in the shape of a cross let in just enough light of sunset to illuminate the scene. Three long tables, mirroring the three walls that the doors were not occupying, were spread with the widest assortment of foods that Milo had ever seen. Fruits and breads, salads and soups, entire sides of beef, racks of lamb, fish, vats of gravy. Mounds of pudding, heaps of butter. And wine at nearly every place. The bottles were constantly being replaced by more scurrying servants, whose glazed eyes and stained shirts fit in strangely with the backdrop of chaos around them.

If the food was extreme and extravagant, the people dining were straight out of fantasy. The two tables facing each other were set on the level of the floor, while the head table was raised a few feet. At these lower tables, all manner of lords, ladies, knights and hedge knights raised a din that was only amplified by the high stone walls. The ladies sat, chatting back and forth, their shimmering gowns and glittering jewelry glinting in the firelight of a thousand candles. The gold-trimmed coats and half-cloaks of merchants and noblemen alike, blended together as men sang, drank, or both. There seemed to be little variation on this theme, Milo observed, at the lower table.

The king's table, however, was very



A. JOEL GLUCK
ORTHODONTICS

A. Joel Gluck DDS, MS

Specialist in Orthodontics

Diplomate, American Board of Orthodontics

Green Hills

4235 Hillsboro Road, Suite 201

Nashville, TN 37215

Phone 615.269.5903 • Fax 615.269.5604

much reserved. A few conversations were going on, a couple talking with a withered old woman, a pair of stiff-necked lords trading polite giggles with a nervous-looking lady with long amber hair. But it was Arthur that snatched Milo's attention. He looked young, with brown hair that hung to his shoulder, a thin beard and thoughtful old eyes, although he looked not a moment over twenty-five. His head leaned on his arm, not engaging the military man in his right, nor the severe-looking woman on his left. He looked alone.

Baal did not seem to register any of this, but flowed forward into the middle of the three tables, dodging countless attendants on the way. When Milo came to a stop in his shadow, the noise had barely abated, and no one seemed to recognize their presence. No one but Arthur. His eyes rested on the two, but he did not say a word.

"My lords and ladies," bellowed Baal, "I give you Magic."

The chatter continued, rising and falling as before, but some of the people had noticed the unusual clothing of the two and watched them as they talked. Milo noticed Baal nod slightly at him, and he figured it was his cue. He whipped his head around, looking for something that might help his cause and found it. Near the door, a huge horn, on a platform stood. As Milo strode toward it, he speculated that it was used for announcing something. Its work was far from over.

Milo hated headphones. He carried with his CD player a set of tin, inexpensive

speakers DJ had stolen for him, and these he placed at the end of the horn. With a final glance at the royal table, he cranked up the volume, and pressed play.

With the first lick of AC/DC's "Thunderstruck," the room fell silent. As the music blared and blasted around the room, people everywhere covered their ears, staring at Milo, trying to call over the riffs. Baal was grinning, really grinning for the first time, tapping his staff in time.

When Milo thought that they had had enough, he pushed pause. Every eye was on him as he tried to smile like it was all planned. He liked attention, but he hated being stared at. Baal took the reins.

"Do you doubt that the ear is the most overlooked organ?" Baal shouted grandly, twirling his staff in great arcs, whipping it over heads and through plates of desserts, bringing it down with a crash after every few syllables, making the people jump and gasp. "It is susceptible to so much. Before you, I command the air, the power and the awe. If you heard that we mean to harm, you heard wrong." The last sentence he seemed to speak directly to Arthur, who seemed unaffected by their display, but enraptured all the same. Baal paused a moment, then spun on his heels, his boot heels clicking his message over and over. Milo followed.

In the hall, Baal clapped Milo on the shoulder. "Perfect. Spot on. I had hoped you would do that."

Milo smiled. "Now they come to us?" Baal nodded, still smiling as they heard the oak doors creak open behind them. "They come to us."

**Congratulations to The Bell Ringer's News
Editor Brock Baker for being named a finalist
for the Morehead Scholarship**

English Is Slightly Different At Winchester

by HUGO SCOTT WHITTLE
Editor of the Wykehamist
Winchester College

'Salvete, omnes. Gaudeo ut adsitis.' Thus quoted your own editor, Brock Baker. It is easy to understand his concern at hearing these words on his arrival at Winchester College. It was, of course, only the Aulæ Præc's oration at Ad Portas. However, it does serve as an introduction to the many quirks of Winchester College. While Brock was a swinker at Win.Coll., he would have been introduced to just a few of these by his fellow three-year men up to Ho:. Brock seemed to find his feet instantly and was a keen contributor up to books, great company in the gallery, a gannet in grubbing hall, an asset in athl and was never brocked, given a boner or tempted to throw his toytime in the wagger-pagger-bagger and toll abs. to his tother. I remember from my days as a Jun: man how daunting Mus and mathw were, how exciting the Stinks Buildings, how difficult to underconstumble the rules on bogels in Michl passage (avoiding Adam and Eve, of course), how absurd the location of Wi:Co:Ri:Co:No:Bo:Do:Co:Ro:Fo:, how unusually strict the rules on raising a shirk (not forgetting to touch Lord's Twig) and, of course, how absurd the idea of notions (Nae).

What the hell am I talking about? The strange language peculiar to Winchester College, called *Notions*. *Notions* actually extends beyond language and covers most of the unusual customs at Winchester, but its main use is in a linguistic context. Perhaps I can explain some of the phrases with which I have already confused you. *Aulae Prae*, and *Ad Portas* are simply relics of Latin

Eats, Shoots and Leaves

by MRS. O'CONNELL,
French Teacher

Editor's note: Mrs. O'Connell, French teacher at MBA and coordinator of the Nashville Sister Cities project with Caen, France, sends the Bell Ringer the following side note to the above article.

Nashville is a Sister City to Caen, France, Magdaburg, Germany, Edmonton, Canada and hopes to become Sister City to a Spanish town and an Italian one soon.

Rene Lozach is a physics and computer professor at the University of Caen. Several years ago I was lucky enough to stay for two weeks with the Lozach family while chaperoning a group of Nashville students who participated in the Caen Sister Cities exchange program. In addition to being a very warm and welcoming family, the Lozach family loves English, and all of them speak it fluently. Rene especially loves intense discussions about French and English – he's a wonderful resource person for me as a teacher of French! He has visited Nashville and even prides himself on understanding "Southern," he's a big fan of Jeff Foxworthy! I always bring him books in English when I visit, and this past June I brought him the book *Eats, Shoots, and Leaves*. Here's what he has to say about it:

nomenclature at the school, meaning the prefect of hall (where the scholars eat their meals) and the ceremony where an important guest is received 'at the gates' of the school. A swinker is a hard-worker, and comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *swincan*, meaning 'to toil'. Three-year men are simply men (boys) who have been at the school for three years, i.e. they are in their penultimate year, and 'up to' or 'up' is used to mean 'in a particular place' – so 'up to Ho' means 'in his boarding house' (with the colon used to indicate an abbreviation); by the same 'logic', 'up to books' means 'in lessons'. A gallery is, strangely enough, a dormitory, grubbing hall the dining hall (where you eat your 'grub'), and uses the common abbreviation and means athletics and to be brooked, coincidentally, means to be teased. Finally, I should explain that 'to be given a boner' simply means 'to be hit on the back', in case anybody was confused. I could go on, and many have, producing fairly large dictionaries of Notions through history, but I won't (thank goodness for that, I hear you say).

The point of this apparently meaningless ramble is to illustrate some of the idiosyncrasies of language. This subject seems to be particularly popular in Britain at the moment, with a good number of semi-serious books on linguistics recently published (*Eats, shoots and leaves*, *Accommodating Broccoli in the Cemetery* and others). Notions is a perfect example of a language which has simply developed of its own accord, without any attempt at an official codification of the rules (of which there are few). British English itself has developed in much the same way, acquiring its words from Latin, Greek, French, Saxon, Hindi, Arabic and many others through the years. This leads

to some rather unusual and seemingly random spellings and pronunciations of words. To quote Noah Webster, 'nothing can be more disputable to the literary character of a nation, than the history of English orthography... The English language, clothed in a barbarous orthography, is never learned by a foreigner but from necessity; and the most copious language in Europe... is thus very limited in its usefulness'. Webster then proceeded to bring about a whole host of spelling reforms, the majority of which were extremely logical and sensible. Odor rather than odour, center rather than centre, program rather than programme. Why, then, are the British so protective of their own spelling? In my view, it all boils down to a feeling of individuality and, to a certain extent, superiority. There is something slightly pleasing about having a mastery of this strange written language, much of which would make little sense even to a foreigner who had a mastery of spoken English. After all, there is no real reason, for example, why the name Featherstonchough should be pronounced 'Fanshaw', but it is, and I imagine that if the spelling or pronunciation were to change, there would be outrage, especially among those whose name it is. One argument for retaining British English's slightly unusual spelling is to ensure that the meaning of older texts is not lost to everybody. However, this argument does not really hold water, since spellings have already changed dramatically since, for example, Shakespeare's time of writing. Indeed, many texts which we read today have had their spelling altered from the original to make them more accessible, so there is no reason why this process should not be continued as spelling reforms are introduced. Some

argue that we should simplify spelling far beyond Webster's reforms, to make it easier for all learning English to read and write correctly. The reforms, it is said, should be brought in over two decades of adjustment: fainali, xen, aafte sam 20 iers ov orxogrefkl riform, wi wud hev a lojkl, speling in ius xrewatwæx Ingliy-spiking world.

Many readers probably understood the final sentence without too much difficulty – it is an extreme example of misspelling – but is still relatively easy to comprehend. Incorrect punctuation, however or, lack of, it makes comprehending the sense of something sometimes, rather, quite difficult. An extreme example of this is: ‘John had had had Jack had had had had had had had had not had the teacher’s consent’: when correctly punctuated, this makes perfect sense (I will leave the reader to puzzle over it). Brock may, on his visit, have encountered several examples of this tendency towards slightly dodgy punctuation. Winchester is full of signs with ambiguous meanings, such as ‘Children slow please’ and ‘Winchester College Private Dogs Prohibited’. It would be irresponsible of me to end this lexicalological amble without using Lynne Truss’ perfect example *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*, taken from the information outside a panda’s cage at the zoo.

So it is my view that, while a reform of spelling to ease communication between British English- and American English-speaking countries would not necessarily be a bad thing, it is perhaps more important to encourage the correct use of punctuation: something which, when misused, can far more easily give rise to misunderstanding, and which is already fairly logical and easy to master.

The Art of Wordplay

by JOSEPH WALKOWICZ
Staff Writer

Coffee (n.), one who is coughed upon

The English language assembles the most peculiar and engrossing varieties of words and phrases. English language expresses much more than the occasional pun or unexpected redundancy. Even alliteration grows repetitive eventually. Alas, no matter how much you manipulate the grammar or expand your vocabulary, there is always more linguistic fun to be had. A wordsmith is best measure by his use and creativity. Beware the master wordsmith – he is the hardest rival in an argument, capable of putting proverbial egg on your face without even cracking the shell.

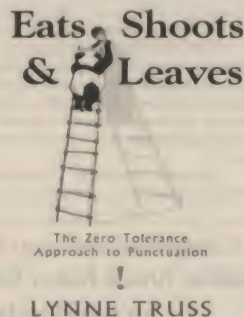
Homophones are those great words that kids love because they are so easy to think of and so easy to use. Instead of articulating "a scared guy hid low," a true wordsmith would simply state, "the coward covered." Homophones rarely divulge themselves in open conversation; they prefer to remain on stationary stationery and express themselves only to those not anticipating an immaculate piece of literature. The master wordsmith would construct such sentences as:

*As they crossed the course course,
the foul fowl discussed his disgust to the
hoarse horse, "I think that barred
bard owed an ode to that sole soul."*

Although the sentence seems extreme, it could easily be slipped into a creative short story.

Acronyms surpass all other forms of wordplay when it comes to advertising. Companies, fundraisers, and associations all utilize acronyms to abridge their cause so as to make it more memorable to the general public. Sometimes, though, acronyms are simply used to make a funny reference or to describe a situation. These include: L.I.E. (Limited Information Estimation) and W.O.E. (Withdrawal of Enthusiasm). If you disappear of acronyms, contact someone from C.R.A.P. (Committee to Resist Acronym Proliferation) to bestow a better meaning. However, the master wordsmith uses an acronym in such a way that the meaning and the word are emphasized: "Well, isn't this a W.O.M.B.A.T." as used by a wordsmith stands for Waste of Money, Brains, and Time, but also makes a humorous reference to a small, stocky, burrowing Australian marsupial.

Continued on p. 6



Fiction Serial

Messengers of Beckoning

Season II, Part III

by CHRIS PICKENS
Staff Writer

Milo Darian finds himself within the castle of Camelot, minutes away from seeing the king...

They were inside Camelot. Not just a movie set, thought Milo, but for real, no-tom-foolery, wake-up-and-smell-the-chivalry castle of the most famous King of his age. As they walked through the hall, Milo could feel his mouth slacken with each passing second.

The stone masonry of the floors and walls, the bristling torch brackets on the walls, the ornate tapestries of incredible detail, the servant's blue livery emblazoned with a white sword in a stone, the echoes of ladies' laughter, the thin breeze that whipped around each corner seemed all not quite real. And yet, when he bumped straight into a rich-looking man in a ridiculous dress thing, the man grumbled at him and pushed past like a real man. It was real.

What's more, his environment seemed to see the reality of his and Baal's existence more clearly than he had seen his own environment. The man he had run into had done a funny sort of double take, fixing his squinting eyes on Milo's receding back until Milo rounded a corner. A servant here or there would look on, disapproving of their lack of ceremony or sense, and after passing more than one open door, Milo heard the scuffling of chairs as the occupants rushed to the threshold, murmuring to themselves.

Through all of this, Baal simply looked forward, his left hand swinging freely, his coat opened and flowing like a plague. He had a small smile on his face, but he seemed not to know it was there. He did look around when Milo found his voice to express a concern of his that had just popped into his head as the sound of a hundred voices reached his ears.

"Do you really think that they will let us saunter straight up to the king and tell him he's going to die sometime soon?"

"We will not tell him just yet," replied Baal quietly. "But he needs to know we are here. More importantly," he said, his voice dropping further, "the killer needs to see us."

Milo narrowed his eyes. "The one who is supposed to kill him is..."

"Right in front of him? Yes, the killer is a nobleman, from somewhere around modern-day Manchester."

Milo dodged a scullery maid bearing a load of linens taller than she was. "Why does he want to knock off Arthur?"

"Don't know. Doesn't much matter, though. The other side will clear the guy's path, then, we step in and do our stuff."

"Sounds romantic."

"Not for the one who dies."

They had come to a huge oak door. It

was covered with noble-looking embossments of knights on horseback charging figures on a great field of battle that snaked through various tales of the knights within. Two great rings, fashioned to look like rings in the nose of two grimacing bulls, glinted sullenly in the near-darkness of the hall.

"You still have not told me how we are getting in. I don't think they have a guest list with our names on it."

Baal smiled and pulled a small leather bag from his pocket. Without a word, he tossed it to the soldier, who turned and strode back the way they had come, his new fortune jingling down the hall.

"Don't worry, bribery is the way of politics in this time."

"Let's not restrict it to this century."

Baal was reaching back into his pockets. "Say what you will, but that bag of gold got us farther than any attempt to sneak into the castle. Now, where is...ah, there," he said, pulling out, to Milo's surprise, his CD player.

"I took it from your school bag," Baal explained, as Milo looked it over. "I thought it might come in handy with these people. Do you have an idea?"

"What are you looking for?"

"Anything they haven't seen. Use your imagination."

Milo smiled to himself. The band inside spoke for itself. "Yeah, I got something. Real shock and awe."

"Good. Let's go." And Baal tugged the doors open.

If the Italian masters had been alive to paint the sight before Milo's eyes, they would have painted a masterpiece. But they would not have captured everything that was happening in the great hall. Opposite them, a tall, thin window in the shape of a cross let in just enough light of sunset to illuminate the scene. Three long tables, mirroring the three walls that the doors were not occupying, were spread with the widest assortment of foods that Milo had ever seen. Fruits and breads, salads and soups, entire sides of beef, racks of lamb, fish, vats of gravy. Mounds of pudding, heaps of butter. And wine at nearly every place. The bottles were constantly being replaced by more scurrying servants, whose glazed eyes and stained shirts fit in strangely with the backdrop of chaos around them.

If the food was extreme and extravagant, the people dining were straight out of fantasy. The two tables facing each other were set on the level of the floor, while the head table was raised a few feet. At these lower tables, all manner of lords, ladies, knights and hedge knights raised a din that was only amplified by the high stone walls. The ladies sat, chatting back and forth, their shimmering gowns and glittering jewelry glinting in the firelight of a thousand candles. The gold-trimmed coats and half-cloaks of merchants and noblemen alike, blended together as men sang, drank, or both. There seemed to be little variation on this theme, Milo observed, at the lower table.

The king's table, however, was very



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much reserved. A few conversations were going on, a couple talking with a withered old woman, a pair of stiff-necked lords trading polite giggles with a nervous-looking lady with long amber hair. But it was Arthur that snatched Milo's attention. He looked young, with brown hair that hung to his shoulder, a thin beard and thoughtful old eyes, although he looked not a moment over twenty-five. His head leaned on his arm, not engaging the military man in his right, nor the severe-looking woman on his left. He looked alone.

Baal did not seem to register any of this, but flowed forward into the middle of the three tables, dodging countless attendants on the way. When Milo came to a stop in his shadow, the noise had barely abated, and no one seemed to recognize their presence. No one but Arthur. His eyes rested on the two, but he did not say a word.

"My lords and ladies," bellowed Baal, "I give you Magic."

The chatter continued, rising and falling as before, but some of the people had noticed the unusual clothing of the two and watched them as they talked. Milo noticed Baal nod slightly at him, and he figured it was his cue. He whipped his head around, looking for something that might help his cause and found it. Near the door, a huge horn, on a platform stood. As Milo strode toward it, he speculated that it was used for announcing something. Its work was far from over.

Milo hated headphones. He carried with his CD player a set of tin, inexpensive

speakers DJ had stolen for him, and these he placed at the end of the horn. With a final glance at the royal table, he cranked up the volume, and pressed play.

With the first lick of AC/DC's "Thunderstruck," the room fell silent. As the music blared and blasted around the room, people everywhere covered their ears, staring at Milo, trying to call over the riffs. Baal was grinning, really grinning for the first time, tapping his staff in time.

When Milo thought that they had had enough, he pushed pause. Every eye was on him as he tried to smile like it was all planned. He liked attention, but he hated being stared at. Baal took the reins.

"Do you doubt that the ear is the most overlooked organ?" Baal shouted grandly, twirling his staff in great arcs, whipping it over heads and through plates of desserts, bringing it down with a crash after every few syllables, making the people jump and gasp. "It is susceptible to so much. Before you, I command the air, the power and the awe. If you heard that we mean to harm, you heard wrong." The last sentence he seemed to speak directly to Arthur, who seemed unaffected by their display, but enraptured all the same. Baal paused a moment, then spun on his heels, his boot heels clicking his message over and over. Milo followed.

In the hall, Baal clapped Milo on the shoulder. "Perfect. Spot on. I had hoped you would do that."

Milo smiled. "Now they come to us?" Baal nodded, still smiling as they heard the oak doors creak open behind them. "They come to us."

Congratulations to *The Bell Ringer's* News Editor Brock Baker for being named a finalist for the Morehead Scholarship

Blood Wedding: Sinister, Dark, Yet Very Good

by MACLEANGRINDELL
Staff Writer

Dark, depressing, sinister: a few words to describe briefly the heartbreaking lives of the characters portrayed by M.B.A.'s actors performing the play *Blood Wedding* during its four-day run December 2nd through 5th. Art is hard work, and this play indeed required the toil to match the talent and skills of the actors in order to animate properly such a twisted and disturbing play. Even though the circumstances that occur in this play are truly extraordinary, the lead actors, Clayton Lainhart, Garrett Anglin, and Tommy Cortes, were able to make the events believable, and such realism achieved the purpose of the play—to unsettle the viewer. Commenting on the nature of this play, the stage manager Martin Wieck states, "I wouldn't say it's too dark, but viewer discretion is advised."

Too dark or not, the amazing part of the production was the acting. Jimmy Flanagan, a technical crew member, when asked about the cast's readiness, stated a few days before show time, "The play flows very well. It is much farther along and better prepared than any other play in which I have participated." The cast was also unusually young, with Garrett Anglin, only a freshman,

playing his first lead role. Others in the play performing on stage for the first time were James Schuller and 8th graders Austin Archer and Will Holt, who all did a fantastic job. The director, Malcolm Morrison, says, "This new wave (of actors) has taken on this magnificent play with real gusto and energy that often leaves them emotionally drained after an evening's rehearsal." It is truly astounding that the cast had enough emotional strength at the end to grin and smile widely during the bows, having just been crying profusely in the scene before.

Despite, though, all the heartrending and "emotionally draining" events depicted in this play, a deeper message was put forth to the audience. Commenting on this internal meaning, the director says, "It is a play about repression and how two people break out from the confines of their Spanish constraints. It is a message to all of us to *break out*." Not only was the audience delighted and amazed by the exceptional acting and unsettled by the evil matter expressed in the play, but also every mind was impelled to ponder how confining traditions and cultural conventions can be and how immense can be the pain which often accompanies the person who wants to try another path.



Chase Altenbern (left) and Clayton Lainhart before opening night of *Blood Wedding*.

The Culinary Club

by WILL HACKETT
Staff Writer

The Culinary Club, more commonly known as the "Food Club," is an organization started by a group of juniors (namely Deon Gaines) to discuss all aspects of kitchen life. The Food Club is involved in activities ranging from cooking with Mr. Morrison to bake sales. Not only does the Food Club benefit the school, it also shares its love for food with the community through the 2nd Harvest Food Bank. Leadership in the Food Club is of utmost importance, and thanks to Deon, Andy Snyder, Nick Anand, Will Hackett, and Luke "Cash Money" Brown, the Food Club is thriving. Faculty help comes from Dr. Marro, Mr. Morrison,

the lovely Mrs. Ekiss, and Mrs. Bakken. Also, Mr. Giron has graciously aided the Food Club by his encouragement, urging the members to travel Nashville to get together and enjoy great food. I was even lucky enough to get some quotes from a couple of the leaders of the Food Club. Andy Snyder quipped, "I like rice!" and Nick Anand added, "I like hamburgers!" The Food Club is open to all who want to learn to cook, eat some food, and help the public, so stop by any of the meetings in the future and get involved. Upcoming events include sorting cans at Second Harvest, cooking lessons with Mr. Morrison, dinner with Mr. Gioia at Swett's, and bake sales during break in the quad.

The Art of Wordplay

continued from p. 4

Another fabulously entertaining use of the modern language is a technique often called *Tom Swifities*. The atrocious swifite was originally started in the 1920's, a classic style of pun. The pun comes in to describe the way in which the speaker talks, for example: "'I haven't caught a fish all day!' Tom said, without debate." Or "'Someone removed the two's from this deck,' Tom deduced." Unless placed in a novel or other literary story, the speaker is simply named "Tom"—thus the name *Tom Swifities*. Now a veteran wordsmith, especially one with a large vocabulary, would devise ingenious citations, such as: "'I punched him in the stomach three times,' Tom said triumphantly." And "'The criminals were escorted downstairs,' Tom said condescendingly."

Parts of the English language are truly fascinating. Conversely, words of the English language are truly fascinating, also. The word *uncopyrightable* is distinguished because it is the longest word you can spell without repeating a letter. Similarly, *strengths* is the longest word that relies on only one vowel, while *rhythms* is the longest word you can spell without any vowels! The brilliance of English doesn't stop with vowels: *goddessship* is the only word with a triple letter, whereas *catchphrase* and *latchstring* are unique words with six consonants in a row. However, I dare not say that this amazement ends with the English language. On the contrary—*taxi* is the same word in nine languages, including French and Portuguese. Idiom, lingo, dialect—whatever you wish to call it—language wordplay is one of the most overlooked wonders of our world today.

Congratulations to MBA's Theater program.
They will be competing this summer in
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Answers About Rifle Team

by TAYLOR SHOPE
Assistant Features Editor

The MBA Rifle team has gone unrecognized for a while, and I thought that the student body should be better informed about this under-appreciated sport. Rifle has had a strong team for the last several years. We have now won eight consecutive state titles, and we won the Alabama state title last year. We have also had several of our graduates receive scholarships for rifle to different universities, including David Amiot, who went to Army; Jared Lostetter, who also went to Army; and Jesse Richards, who received a scholarship to Randolph-Macon, but went to Oklahoma instead. The season this year has been going fairly well. The team has come in second in the Rifle Classic, and came in second again at the Gary Andersen Invitational on the 4th of December. Our main competition is schools in other states, and the ROTC programs that are common throughout the sport of rifle. The three schools that are MBA's toughest competition are Woodward Academy in Atlanta, Georgia; Shelby County MROTC in Louisville, Kentucky; and St. Louis University School in St. Louis, Missouri. So far this season, we have competed against Woodward twice (record of 1-1), Shelby County once (record 1-0), and St. Louis once (record 0-1).

Often, we are asked questions that make me wonder, "What were you thinking?"

or "Duh?" So I am going to give you a list of Frequently Asked Questions with answers to which you can refer whenever you yourself have these questions:

1. What guns do you guys shoot?
We shoot .177 pellet guns and occasionally .22 rifles
2. Do you guys hunt?
With the exception of Jordan Klein, NO, we don't hunt.
3. How long is the season?
It starts the first week of school, and ends around the end of April
4. How can I join?
Sign up on the athletic sheet at the beginning of the season
5. Do you guys lift or run?
Yes. We lift and run on the days that we don't shoot
6. When are matches?
Matches are quite often. We shoot a match usually about every two weeks.
7. Do you guys hunt?
NO, we don't hunt.
8. Do you guys hunt?
NO, and please STOP ASKING!
9. When is practice?
Varsity shoots on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. JV shoots on Tuesday and Thursday.

If anyone is interested in joining, then please come talk to team members, the team captain, Ben Norton, me, or Coach Lujan.



Seniors (l to r) Dean McKenzie, Pierce Sandwith, Matthew Christie, and Curtis Lane.

Bowling Competes for State Championship

by PIERCE SANDWITH
Staff Writer, Bowler Extraordinaire

After the 2003-2004 MBA Bowling team fell just short of the State Championship, this year's team is attempting to build on the momentum gained from last year. Although the team lost many graduating seniors, six bowlers returned this year, and stud bowlers such as Dean McKenzie, Curtis Lane, and David Robinson were added into the mix. The crafty veterans, led by captains Matt Eskind and David Bilhartz, quickly taught the new bowlers all about Plamor's chili cheese cheesesticks and the infamous chicken fries of Franklin Lanes. In no time, these new bowlers were throwing strikes and snarfing mass quantities of curly fries like experienced pros.

Because of Commander Carr's inspirational "Take No Prisoners" pep talks and the awe-inspiring managerial and typing skills of Matthew "Alphonze" Christie, this year's bowling team has 16 wins and only 2 losses, both of which were to the "Evil Empire" of Father Ryan. The regular season was highlighted by Will Freeman's famous assembly-announcement-worthy 300 game,

which helped MBA to victory over the mighty Middle Tennessee Christian School Christians, and the consistent bowling of freshman Rand "The Professor" Woodson and senior Scott "Twinkletoes" Vaughn. Although he was sick the day of the actual 300, Curtis Lane has described the Freeman pin-assault as simply "mind-boggling scrumptululent."

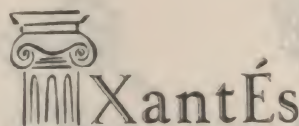
With these accomplishments and a nearly flawless record, the bowling team is in a tie with Father Ryan for the number one seed in the Middle Region, and the team will be representing MBA in the State Championships. In this tournament, senior demigod bowler Dean McKenzie has already "guaranteed a 300 game and free cheesesticks" for all those hardy fans willing to make the trek down Interstate 24. The State Championship will take place in the Mecca of Competitive Bowling that is the madhouse, Cameron Indoor-like, Smyrna Lanes on January 29th and 30th, with bowling beginning on Friday afternoon and continuing onto Saturday morning. The team would greatly appreciate fan support, so come on out and see some intense, spine-tingling bowling action.

Basketball Stats

Deon Gaines: 12.9 points per game
Brenton Harrison: 10.3 points per game
C.J. Hurt: 9.1 points per game
Tee Patterson: 8.8 points per game
Nick Anand: 2.1 points per game
Adam Baker: 1.8 points per game
David Smith: 2.0 points per game
Sam Little: 1.9 points per game
Thomas Sanders: 1.0 points per game
Hughes Tipton: 1.5 points per game

Congratulations to MBA's All-State Football Players

The following players were named to the Division II Super-7 All State Team: Offense: Joseph Birdsong, Leonard Edwards, Bryant Hahnfeldt, Brian Harris, Andy Snyder; Defense: Jim Beckner, Matt Bubis, Chad Hume, Chambliss Shillinglaw. Honorable Mention: Offense: Bransford Maxwell, Jay Pilkerton; Defense: Luke Brown, Hughes Tipton, Mitchell Williams.



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